

Armageddon: Past or Future?

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Are Millions Being Misled, Again?

Armageddon is coming April 8th! According to proponents, that's the publicized date when it will be "unleashing everywhere" and "no one will escape!" The only question now being asked by a multi-media promotional campaign is, "Are you prepared for Armageddon?"

Fortunately, this alarming announcement is not about a future USA vs. Iraqi conflict or for the real so-called final "battle of Armageddon" at the supposed end of the world. I am speaking of [Tim LaHaye](#) and Jerry Jenkins' tenth and latest blockbuster title in their wildly popular *Left Behind* series. It is provocatively titled *Armageddon*.

Even though this is another work of fiction, LaHaye contends that his works of fiction are conduits of "God's end-times truths." There is no question that he is seriously committed to equipping "Christians with the prophetic knowledge that God expects His children to have."¹ The *Left Behind* series has proven to be the best vehicle to achieve his goal. Its 50,000,000 books sold-to-date are designed to reach people in a way his "non-fiction" books can not. And, they are doing just that—literally influencing and convincing multiple millions toward his view.

Unfortunately, his books are based upon an eschatological view that is not held by many Christians, and for good reasons. A case in point is this latest book. Below are

ten biblical reasons why the theology behind *Armageddon*'s story line is biblically flawed.

1. The name of the battle is NOT “Armageddon” or “the battle of Armageddon.” It’s “the battle on the great day of God Almighty” ([Rev. 16:14](#)). Armageddon is the location of this battle. Big difference!
2. The location is NOT in Israel’s largest valley, 50 miles north of Jerusalem, as is commonly thought. Yet this 20-mile long and 14-mile wide valley (presently known as the Valley of Jezreel or the Plain of Megiddo) remains one of the popular stops on most tours of Israel. According to Scripture, the location of this battle “in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon/Megiddo” ([Rev. 16:16](#)). But “har” is the Hebrew word for mountain. A mountain is the exact opposite in meaning from a valley.² Since in Hebrew the ‘h’ is silent, the Greek rendering became “Armageddon.”
3. This battle is part of the whole prophecy of the book of Revelation. According to Revelation itself, its whole prophecy were things that “would shortly take place” ([Rev. 1:1; 22:6](#)), were “at hand” ([Rev. 1:3; 22:10](#)), and were obeyable, heedable, keepable ([Rev. 1:3; 22:7](#)) in the lives of this book’s original recipients in that 1st Century time frame.
4. Likewise, the whole of this prophecy was not to be sealed up ([Rev. 22:10](#)). But LaHaye and Jenkins have, in essence, sealed it up for over nineteen centuries and counting via their postponement interpretation. Now, however, they want to unseal it by claiming that these events will finally and soon occur in our day and time.
5. A strong case can be made that the book of Revelation was written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70.³
6. Har-Magedon/Megiddo, where this great end-time battle takes place, is a composite name and, most likely, symbolic. It is contained in a book filled with signs and symbols. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to conclude that it, too, is symbolic of a real battle. BAGD rightly recognizes that “Armageddon is a mystic place-name” and “has been identified with Megiddo and Jerusalem.” Yet they lament that “its interpretation is beset with difficulties that have not yet been surmounted.”⁴ Or, have they? Read on.
7. The most likely case is that Revelation’s “Har” is Jerusalem. Geographically, Jerusalem sits on top of a mountain. To get there from any direction one must go “up to Jerusalem” ([2 Sam. 19:34](#); [1 Ki. 12:28](#); [2 Ki. 18:17](#); [2 Chron. 2:16](#); [Ezra 1:3](#); [7:7](#); [Zech. 14:17](#); [Matt. 20:17, 18](#); [Mark 10:32, 33](#); [Luke 18:31; 19:28](#); [John 2:13; 5:1](#); [Acts 11:2; 15:2; 21:12, 15; 24:11; 25:9](#); [Gal. 1:17, 18](#)). Jerusalem is also

called God's "holy mountain" ([Psa. 43:3](#)) and the "chief among the mountains" ([Isa. 2:2-3](#); also [14:13](#); [Exod. 15:17](#); [Joel 2:32](#); [3:16-17](#)).

8. Based on other Scriptures, one can also make a case for "Magedon/Megiddo" pointing to Jerusalem. During the time of Jesus and Revelation's subsequent writing, large crowds of devout Jews would gather three times a year to celebrate their religious feasts in this central city. Other related Hebrew terms support this identification:

Har Mo'edh, the mount of assembly

Ar himdah, God's city of desire

Har migdo, His fruitful mountain (Mount Zion)

megiddow, rendezvous – from *gadad*, to crowd, assemble, gather.

9. "Magedon/Megiddo" may also be comparative imagery. A great slaughter once took place in the valley of *Megiddo* ([2 Ki. 9:27](#); [Zech. 12:11](#)). Throughout ancient history, this valley was also a favorite corridor for invading armies and the scene of numerous famous battles ([Jud. 4-7](#); [1 Sam. 29-31](#); [2 Sam. 4](#); [1 Ki. 9:15](#); [2 Ki. 9-10](#); [22](#); [2 Chron. 35](#)). So much blood was shed in this valley of Jezreel or Megiddo that it became a synonym for slaughter, violence, bloodshed, and battlefield, as well as a symbol for God's judgment ([Hos. 1:4-5](#)). In our day, Armageddon has also become synonymous with and a symbol for the ultimate in warfare and conflict.

In a similar fashion, the word "Waterloo" has garnered a symbolic use. Back in 1815, this town in Belgium was the battleground and scene of Napoleon's final defeat. Today, we have a saying that some one or some thing has met their "Waterloo." We don't mean they have met that city in Europe. We mean, by way of comparative imagery, that they have met a decisive or crushing defeat, or their demise. I suggest Revelation employs the word Magedon/Megiddo in this same manner.

10. History records that a great slaughter took place on a mountain in Palestine within the lifetime of the original recipients of the book of Revelation. In A.D. 70 the Roman armies of Titus totally destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. According to Eusebius, 1.1million Jews were killed. Even more perished in the Galilean fighting, died of starvation or disease, and/or were taken into captivity.

This event was certainly a judgment of God. I submit that it was more than that. First, it was a day of the Lord judgment of God and in keeping with Jehovah God's many comings "on the clouds" in day-of-the-Lord judgments in Old Testament times:

1. [Isaiah 13:10, 13](#)—judgment of Babylon (539 B.C.)
2. [Isaiah 34:4](#)—judgment of Edom (late 6th century B.C.)
3. [Ezekiel 32:7](#)—judgment of Egypt (568 B.C.)
4. [Nahum 1:5](#)—judgment of Nineveh (612 B.C.)
5. [Joel 2:10](#)—judgment of Judah (586 B.C.)
6. [Amos 8:9](#)--judgment of the northern kingdom (722 B.C.)

Secondly, since the New Testament states that all judgment has been given by the Father to the Son ([John 5:22](#)), I submit that this A.D. 70 coming in judgment, was the coming of Jesus “on the clouds” ([Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Rev. 1:7](#)) and “in the Father’s glory” ([Matt. 16:27; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26](#)), as Jehovah God had come many times before (see above bullets).

Consequently, in speaking of his coming again, Jesus **used exactly the same language of the Prophets (cosmic-darkening and collapsing, earth-shaking), described it exactly the sameway (“on the clouds”), for exactly the same purpose (judgment), to accomplish exactly the same thing (destruction of a nation), and employed exactly the same instrumentality (foreign armies).**

In sum, this decisive battle of the “last days” period in which they were living back then and there ([Heb. 1:2](#)) was totally relevant to, took place during, and was fulfilled within the lifetime of Revelation’s original readers. Hence, Revelation’s “Armageddon” took place in Jerusalem. Historically, its fulfillment is behind us, and not ahead of us. It is past, and not future.⁵

A strong case also can be made that all of the literal and symbolic end-time details portrayed in the book of Revelation were precisely fulfilled during these same events and in keeping with the time-restricted context this last book of the Bible imposed upon itself.

Of course, there is more, much more. But the biblical facts seem to indicate that LaHaye and Jenkins are over nineteen centuries off in their timing and topologically (valley vs. mountain) far afield in their location of this “battle on the great day of God Almighty.” They, and others, have erroneously termed it “the battle of Armageddon.” I further suggest that it is time for God’s people to “wake up, O sleeper . . .” ([Eph. 5:14](#)) —i.e., those who love biblical truth, and not fiction or fantasy. We must stop abdicating this area of our faith to the likes of LaHaye and Jenkins. Everyday, millions are being adversely affected and many more deeply entrenched by their biblically flawed view. But as Jesus said, “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” ([John 8:32](#)). First, truth must get a hearing. If it doesn’t, it can get left behind.

Will you be an ambassador for this truth at this critical time ([2 Cor. 5:20](#))? If so, please discuss this short article with others, and pass it along.

^[1] Advertisement – “Introducing the LaHaye Prophecy Study Group,” *Christianity Today*, February 2003, 13.

^[1] The ancient town of Megiddo was situated on a small mound a few hundred feet high and adjacent to this valley on the west.

^[1] See Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *Before Jerusalem Fell* (Atlanta, GA.: American Vision, 1998). John A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Philadelphia, PA.: Westminster Press, 1976).

^[1] Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 107.

^[1] Possible ongoing applications (not fulfillments) of this prophecy are beyond the scope of this article.

For further biblical corrections of ‘Left Behind’ theology see:

- 10 Reasons why the Paul’s “caught-up” ([1 Thess. 4:13-17](#); also [1 Cor. 15:51-54](#)) is not a rapture-removal of a group of alive believers from the surface of planet Earth—see pages 15-31 in my book, *Shattering the ‘Left Behind’ Delusion*.
- Many reasons why Daniel’s 70th week ([Dan. 9:24-27](#)) is not a future 7-year period of tribulation orchestrated by the Antichrist, but instead was a 7-year period of covenantal confirmation perfectly fulfilled by Christ—see pages 71-109 in my book, *Beyond the End Times*.
- For many reasons why the Great Tribulation and the biblical “last days” are behind us and not ahead of us—also see pages 131-162 in my book, *Beyond the End Times*.